

## **ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE**

The present invention extends to methods, systems, computer program products, and data structures for decoupling an attachment from an electronic message that included the attachment. Generally, data fields of electronic messages and attachments are created in accordance with an electronic message schema hierarchy. Attachments are configured to have a data field indicating if the attachment is to persist when a corresponding electronic message is deleted. When an attachment persists, a user may be able to locate and use the attachment after a corresponding electronic message has been deleted (even if the attachment has not been expressly saved). Attachments are configured to include attachment metadata indicating properties of an electronic message that included the attachment. Accordingly, a user can access information (e.g., sender, subject, date, etc) associated with an electronic message (e.g., that included the attachment) even after the electronic message has been deleted.

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